

41780/FLC/H528-H0002193

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CUSTOMER STOREFRONT OPERATIONS

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus for managing a decentralized part supply system via a wide area network. A supplier and a customer establish a secure area at the customer's facility. The supplier ships parts to the secure area and the customer stores the parts in the secure area until the customer issues the parts for the customer's use. The supplier and the customer cooperate in managing a secure area inventory database using a virtual storefront. The business rules, database access processes, and user interfaces for the virtual storefront are implemented on a server and accessed by the supplier and the customer via the wide area network.

FLC/flc

SD2 PAS342010.1--4/19/01 6:06 PM